THE

EARL OF WA

A TRAGEDY

IN FIVE AC

BY DR. FRAN

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THEATRE ROYAL, L

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FROM THE PROM

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BY Mr.

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REMARKS.

This is the dramatic history of the Earl of Warwick; whose exploits as a soldier, and intrigues as a politician, obtained him a second title from the populace—a title, at this time, recognised by all Christendom, in the person of another warrior. Warwick was called—"The Setter-up and Puller-down of Kings."

By some, this appellation was meant as an honour; by others, as a reproach to Warwick: but as, in the distribution of thrones, he never showed a wish to secure one for himself, it may fairly be supposed that he conscientiously gave the royal sceptre into that hand, which he hoped and believed best could wield it; his latent self love pointing out to him, alternately, that candidate as most worthy of the crown, who most revered his power and dignity.

In this tragedy, the youthful, gay, and gallant Edward the Fourth, is, for the first and the last time, brought upon the stage in person; though a well-known character, by description, in some of our best English dramas.

Edward is excellently described in the play of "Jane Shore," as her betrayer, and doting lover. In

"Richard the Third," he is depicted as a dying king, and the beloved husband of this very Elizabeth, for whom, in this tragedy, he sighs; and whose power over his heart, caused the resentment of his friend, the Earl of Warwick; and, of consequence, the loss of his throne, till that great man chose to be appeased.

The reader will probably have a much higher respect for the charms of the Lady Elizabeth Grey, here celebrated, and of her whole character, by keeping in his recollection, that she was afterwards the afflicted mother of the two young princes, murdered in the Tower; and the mother-in-law of Richmond, afterwards Henry the Seventh.

The famed Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, here portrayed, was the daughter of René of Anjou, King of Sicily: and, all heroine as she was, in heading whole armies to fight her captive husband's battles, her prowess in the field was far less eminent than that of the female general, her immediate precursor:—Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, acted her military feats in the early part of the reign of Henry the Sixth; and Joan's and Margaret's achievements in arms, might have taught the Earl of Warwick less vain glory in his martial deeds.

The character of Margaret is so well drawn in this play, that, by the dignified exertions of Mrs. Yates, who first appeared in the part, the play had a very favourable reception.

A mistake occurred during the rehearsal of this drama, which proves the deception to which dramatic writ-

ers, managers of theatres, and the actors, are frequently liable.—Every one of the before named experienced persons, who were concerned in the tragedy of the "Earl of Warwick," condoled with Mrs. Yates, before the piece was brought forth, on her having to represent a part in it of such ferocious mind and manners, as would infallibly be hateful to every auditor. The event proved otherwise; and Margaret of Anjou was the favourite character of the public, the sole upholder of the play in its long attraction, and obscured, with her brilliancy, both Warwick and the King, although the two most admired actors of the theatre, Holland and Powell, represented those parts.

This tragedy is a translation from the French play of the same name, by the famous De La Harpe, who died since the French revolution. It was first acted in Paris in the year 1764; and was brought on the stage in this country in 1767, by Dr. Thomas Franklin, called the *Grecian*, from his learning.

The original writer did wrong by inventing, but the translator, as an Englishman, has done worse in adopting, an historical falsehood introduced at the catastrophe of this play. The famed Earl of Warwick was slain at the battle of Barnet; which being a circumstance more likely to be forgotten, than that Richard the Third was killed in Bosworth field; it ought to have been held peculiarly sacred by the poet, as a recorded truth, which, by fictitious colouring, might easily be effaced from the memory of the young.

To those who love that long disputed subject of

kingly prerogative, and the privileges of the people, some scenes between Edward and the Earl of Warwick, may give high amusement: and may possibly fix their wavering opinions—upon which ever side they chance to be inclining.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING EDWARD	*Mr. H. Siddons.*
EARL OF WARWICK	*Master Betty.*
SUFFOLK	*Mr. Bartley.*
PEMBROKE	*Mr. Powell.*
MARGARET OF ANJOU	*Mrs. Powell.*
LADY ELIZABETH GREY	*Mrs. H. Siddons.*
LADY CLIFFORD	*Miss Boyce.*

OFFICERS, GUARDS, *&c.*

EARL OF WARWICK.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Palace.

Enter Margaret *of* Anjou, *and* Lady Clifford.

Lady C. Thanks, gracious Heaven! my royal mistress smiles;
Unusual gladness sparkles in her eye,
And bids new welcome in the stranger, joy,
To his new mansion.
Marg. Yes, my faithful Clifford,
Fortune is weary of oppressing me:
Through my dark cloud of grief, a cheerful ray
Of light breaks forth, and gilds the whole horizon.
Lady C. Henry in chains, and Edward on the throne
Of Lancaster; thyself a pris'ner here;
Thy captive son torn from his mother's arms,
And in the tyrant's power; a kingdom lost:—
Amidst so many sorrows, what new hope
Has wrought this wondrous change?

Marg. That, which alone,
In sorrow's bitt'rest hour, can minister
Sweet comfort to the daughters of affliction,
And bid misfortune smile—the hope of vengeance:
Vengeance, benignant patron of distress,
Thee I have oft invok'd, propitious now
Thou smil'st upon me; if I do not grasp
The glorious opportunity, henceforth
Indignant frown, and leave me to my fate!

Lady C. Unhappy princess! that deceiver, hope,
Hath often flatter'd, and as oft betray'd thee:
What hast thou gain'd by all its promises?
What's the reward of all thy toils?

Marg. Edward and Warwick, those detested names,
Too well thou know'st, united to destroy me.

Lady C. That was, indeed, a fatal league.

Marg. But mark me;—
If we could break this adamantine chain,
We might again be free: this mighty warrior,
This dread of kings, th' unconquerable Warwick,
Is plighted to the fair Elizabeth.

Lady C. The Lady Gray, you mean, the beauteous widow,
Whose husband fell in arms for Lancaster.

Marg. The same.—Warwick long has lov'd—

Lady C. And means to wed her.

Marg. But if I have art,
Or she ambition, that shall never be.

Lady C. Canst thou prevent it?

Marg. Yes, my Clifford,
I sh.ll provide her with a fitter husband,
A nobler far, and worthier of her charms—
Young Edward.——

Lady C. Ha! the king! impossible!
Warwick, ev'n now, commission'd by the state,
To treat with Lewis, offers England's throne
To France's daughter, and ere this, perhaps,
Hath sign'd the solemn contract.

Marg. Solemn trifles!
Mere cobweb ties—Love's a despotic tyrant!
Edward is youthful, gay, and amorous;
His soul is ever open to the lure
Of beauty, and Elizabeth has charms
Might shake a hermit's virtue.
Lady C. Hath he seen
This peerless fair one?
Marg. Yes—by my contrivance,
When last he hunted in the forest, some,
Whom I had planted there, as if by chance
Alone directed, led him cross the lawn
To Grafton; there—even as my soul had wish'd,
Elizabeth surpris'd
His unsuspecting heart——
Lady C. What follow'd?
Marg. O!——
He gaz'd, and wonder'd; for a while, his pride
Indignant rose, and struggled with his passion;
But love was soon victorious; and, last night,
The Earl of Suffolk, so my trusty spies
Inform me, was despatch'd, on wings of love,
To plead his master's cause, and offer her
The throne of England.
Lady C. What, if she refuse
The golden bribe?
Marg. No matter; all I wish
Is but to make them foes.—Warwick
Is fiery, and impatient of reproof;
He will not brook a rival in his love,
Though seated on the throne; besides, thou know'st
The haughty earl looks down with scorn on Edward,
As the mere work of his all-powerful hand,
The baby monarch of his own creation.
Lady C. Believe me, madam, Edward still reveres
And loves him, still, as conscious of the debt,
Pays him with trust and confidence; their souls

Are link'd together in the strictest bonds
Of sacred friendship.

Marg. That but serves my cause:
Where ties are close, and interests united,
The slightest injuries are severely felt;
Offended friendship never can forgive.

Lady C. Now the full prospect opens to my view:
I see thy distant aim, and trace the paths
Of vengeance: England will soon be a scene
Of blood and horror; discord's fatal torch
Once lit up, in this devoted land,
What pow'r shall e'er extinguish it? Alas!
I tremble at the consequence.

Marg. And I
Enjoy it: O! 'twill be a noble contest
Of pride 'gainst pride, oppression 'gainst oppression;
Rise but the storm, and let the waves beat high,
The wreck may be our own:—
And see, the king approaches;
This way he passes from the council—Mark
His downcast eye; he is a stricken deer;
He cannot 'scape;
We'll meet and speak to him.

Lady C. What mean you, madam?

Marg. To ask him—what, I know, he will refuse;
That gives me fair pretext to break with him,
And join the man I hate, vindictive Warwick;
But soft—he comes——

Enter KING EDWARD *and an* OFFICER.

King E. Is Suffolk yet return'd?
[*To the* OFFICER.

Offi. No, my good liege.

King E. Go, wait and bring him to me, [*Exit.*
I'll to my closet. Pardon me, fair lady,
I saw you not.

Marg. Perhaps it is beneath

A conqu'ror to look down upon his slave;
But I've a boon to ask.

King E. Whate'er it is,
Within the limits of fair courtesy,
Which honour can bestow, I'll not refuse thee.

Marg. There was a time, when Margaret of Anjou
Would not have deign'd to ask of Edward aught;
Nor was there aught that Edward dar'd refuse her;
But that is past—great Warwick's arm prevail'd,
And I am now your pris'ner.

King E. Since the hour
When fortune smil'd propitious on the cause
Of justice, and gave vict'ry to our arms,
You have been treated with all due respect,
Or your condition, or your sex could claim;
Serv'd like a queen, and lodg'd within our palace,
Is there aught more you can with reason ask,
Or I, in prudence, grant you?

Marg. Give me back
The liberty I lost—restore my son,
And I may then, perhaps, be reconcil'd
To an usurper; may withhold my vengeance,
And let thee sit, unpunish'd, on—my throne.

King E. You talk too proudly, madam; but to show you
I cannot fear, you have your liberty.
Letters this morning I receiv'd from France,
Have offer'd noble ransom for your person;
Without that ransom (for the soul of Edward
Is far above the sordid lust of gold)
I grant it—from this moment you are free;
But for your son—I cannot part with him.

Marg. I scorn your bounties—scorn your proffer'd freedom!
What's liberty to me without my child?
But fate will place us soon above thy reach;
Thy short-liv'd tyranny is almost past;

The storm is gath'ring on thee, and will burst
With tenfold vengeance on thy guilty head.

King E. I am not to be talk'd into submission,
Nor dread the menace of a clam'rous woman.

Marg. Thou may'st have cause to dread a woman's pow'r.
The time may come—mark my prophetic word—
When wayward beauty shall repay, with scorn,
Thy fruitless vows, and vindicate my wrongs:
The friend thou lean'st on, like a broken reed,
Shall pierce thy side, and fill thy soul with anguish,
Keen as the pangs I feel: York's perjur'd house
Shall sink to rise no more; and Lancaster,
With added lustre, reassume the throne.
Hear this, and tremble—give me back my son—
Or dread the vengeance of a desp'rate mother. [*Exit.*

King E. Imperious woman! but the voice of woe
Is ever clam'rous: 'tis the privilege,
The charter of affliction, to complain.——
This tardy Suffolk! how I long to know,
Yet dread to hear, my fate! Elizabeth,
On thee the colour of my future life
Depends! for thou alone canst make me bless'd,
Or curs'd, for ever!——O! this cruel doubt
Is worse than all my tortures;—but he comes,
Th' ambassador of love!

Enter the EARL OF SUFFOLK.

What news, my Suffolk?
Shall I be happy?—O! I'm on the rack
Of expectation:—Didst thou tell my tale
As if it were thy own—and may I hope——

Suf. My royal liege——

King E. Good Suffolk, lay aside
The forms of dull respect; be brief, and tell me—
Speak, hast thou seen her?—Will she be my queen?
Quick! tell me ev'ry circumstance—each word,

Each look, each gesture:—Didst thou mark them,
Suffolk?—

Suf. I did; and will recount it all.—Last night,
By your command, in secret I repair'd
To Grafton's tufted bow'r, the happy seat
Of innocence and beauty; there I found
Thy soul's best hope, the fair Elizabeth:
Ne'er did these eyes behold such sweet perfection:
I found her busy'd in the pious office
Of filial duty, tending her sick father.

King E. That was a lucky moment to prefer
My humble suit: touch but the tender string
Of soft compassion in the heart, and love
Will quickly vibrate to its kindred passion.
You urg'd our royal purpose, then?

Suf. I did,
With all the warmth of friendship; dwelt with plea-
sure
On ev'ry princely virtue that adorns
Your noble heart: she listen'd with attention,
And echo'd back your praises.

King E. Was not that
A kind propitious omen?

Suf. Such, indeed,
Hoping to find it, I call'd in the pow'rs
Of flattery to my aid, and gaz'd upon her,
As if confounded by her dazzling beauties:—
Conscious she smil'd; but when, at length, I spake
Of England's monarch sighing at her feet,
The crimson glow of modesty o'erspread
Her cheek, and gave new lustre to her charms:
She turn'd aside; and as she silent bow'd
Her doubtful thanks, I mark'd the pearly tear
Steal down its secret track; and from her breast
Heard a deep sigh, she struggled to conceal.
If I have any judgment, or can trace
The hidden feelings of a woman's heart,
Her's is already fix'd: I fear, my liege,

With all that England, all that thou couldst give,
The crown would sit but heavy on her brow.

King E. Not heavier, Suffolk, than it sits on mine:—
My throne is irksome to me; who would wish
To be a sov'reign, when Elizabeth
Prefers a subject?—Then th' impetuous Warwick—
His awful virtue shall chastise my weakness.
I've promis'd Lewis to espouse his daughter,
To strengthen our alliance: would to Heaven
I had not! If I seek this coy refuser,
And break with France, Warwick will take th' alarm;
If once offended, he's inexorable.

Suf. I know him well.—Believe me, sir, the high
And haughty spirit, when it meets rebuke,
Is easiest check'd, and sinks into submission.
Let him, my liege, who ventures to arraign
His master's conduct, look into his own:
There ever is a corner in the heart
Open to folly; Warwick is not free
From human frailties.

King E. No; ambition fires
His noble breast; love triumphs over mine:
But well thou know'st I dread his keen reproach.
We seldom pity woes we ne'er experienc'd,
Or pardon weakness which we do not feel:
He is a hero.

Suf. Heroes are but men;
I have some cause to think so—but of that
We'll talk another time: meanwhile, my liege,
I think Lord Warwick is a useful friend.

King E. Ay, and a dangerous foe; the people love,
To adoration love him: if he falls
From his allegiance, crowds will follow him.
England has long been rent by civil broils,
And fain would rest her in the arms of peace;
Her wounds scarce clos'd, shall Edward open them,
And bid them bleed afresh? believe me, Suffolk,

I would not be the cause of new divisions
Amongst my people, for a thousand kingdoms.

Suf. 'Tis nobly said, and may thy grateful subjects
Revere thy virtues, and reward thy love!

King E. O, Suffolk! did they know but half the cares
That wait on royalty, they would not grudge
Their wretched master a few private hours
Of social happiness.—If France consents,
I am undone; and Warwick hath, ere this,
Enslav'd me; curse on this state policy,
That binds us thus to love at second hand!
Who knows but he may link me to a wretch;
Wed me to folly, ignorance, and pride,
Illnature, sickness, or deformity;
And, when I'm chain'd to misery, coldly tell me,
To sooth my griefs, 'twas for the public good.

Suf. How far you have commission'd him, I know not;
But were I worthy to advise, my liege,
I would not be the dupe of his ambition,
But follow Nature's dictates, and be happy.
England has charms besides Elizabeth's,
And beauties that—

King E. No more; my heart is fix'd
On her alone; find out this pow'rful rival,
I charge thee, Suffolk: yet why wish to find,
What found, will make me wretched? were he bound
In cords of tenderest friendship round my heart,
Dearer than Warwick, dearer than thyself,
Forgive me, but I fear I should abhor him.
O! think on something that may yet be done,
To win her to my heart ere Warwick comes.

Suf. I hear he is expected every hour.

King E. Grant, Heaven! some friendly wind may yet retard him.—
I dread his presence here.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My liege, the Earl
Of Warwick is arriv'd.

King E. Ha! when?—How?—Where?
Would he were bury'd in the rapid waves
That brought him hither! Comes he here to night?

Mess. My liege, ere now he might have reach'd the palace,
But that the shouting multitudes press hard,
On ev'ry side, and seem to worship him. [*Exit.*

King E. What's to be done? I cannot, must not, see him,
Till all is fix'd: once more, my best lov'd Suffolk,
Try the soft arts of thy persuasive tongue:
What method canst thou think on, to evade
This promis'd marriage with ambitious France?

Suf. Summon your council—lay your thoughts before them:
Meet Warwick there, and urge a sov'reign's right,
To please himself in that which should concern
Himself alone. Firm Buckingham and I
Will plead your cause against the haughty Warwick;
Whom I would treat with cold civility,
And distant state, which ever angers more
Resentful spirits, than the warmth of passion.

King E. 'Tis well advis'd: mean time, if possible,
I will compose my troubled thoughts to rest.
Suffolk, adieu: if Warwick asks for me,
I am not well—I'm hunting in the forest—
I'm busy—stay—remember what I told you,
Touching the earldom which I meant to give
Her father; that may bring her to the court;
You understand me, Suffolk—fare thee well.—
[*Exit* SUFFOLK.
Why should I dread to see the man I love—
The man I rev'rence?—Warwick is not chang'd,

But Edward is—Suffolk, I know, abhors him;
A favourite must be hated: if he urges
This dreadful contract, I shall hate him too:
I cannot live without Elizabeth;
I'll think no more—if I must sacrifice
My friendship or my love—the choice is made. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter the EARL *of* WARWICK, *speaking to an* OFFICER.

Warw. 'Tis well; I shall attend his highness' pleasure. [*Comes forward.*
Meet me i'th' council!—Warwick might have claim'd
A private audience. After all my toils,
My perils in his service, 'tis a cold,
Unkind reception; some base whisperer,
Some needy sycophant, perhaps, hath poison'd
My royal master's ear: or, do I judge too rashly?—
As my embassy concerns
The public welfare, he would honour me
With public thanks—Elizabeth will chide me
For this unkind delay: but honour calls,
And duty to my king; that task perform'd,
I haste, my love, to happiness and thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Council Chamber.

KING EDWARD, DUKES OF CLARENCE *and* BUCKINGHAM, EARLS OF SUFFOLK, PEMBROKE, *&c.*

King E. Good Buckingham, I thank thee for thy counsel,
Nor blame thy honest warmth; I love this freedom,
It is the birthright of an Englishman,
And doth become thee: what says noble Suffolk?

Suff. I would not cross my royal master's will;
But, on my soul, I think, this nuptial league
With France, prepost'rous, and impolitic;
It cannot last; we are by nature foes,
And naught but mutual poverty and weakness,
Can ever make us friends: she wants our aid
Against the pow'rful Burgundy, and therefore
Throws out this lure of beauty to ensnare you;
That purpose gain'd, she turns her arms against us.

Pemb. Why, let her: if she comes with hostile arm,
England, thank Heaven, is ready to receive her.
I love my country, and revere my king,
As much, perhaps, as honest Buckingham,
Or my good, fearful Lord of Suffolk here,
Who knows so well, or would be thought to know,
What France will do hereafter: yet I think,
The faith of nations is a thing so sacred,
It ought not to be trifled with. I hate
As much as you, th' unnatural, forc'd alliance;
And yet, my lords, if Warwick is empower'd,

(For so I hear he is), to treat with Lewis,
I know not how in honour you can swerve
From his conditions. [*Shouting.*
Hark! the hero comes:
Those shouts proclaim him near: the joyful people
Will usher in their great deliverer,
As he deserves.

Enter WARWICK.

King E. Thrice welcome, noble Warwick,
Welcome to all! [*To* CLARENCE, PEMBROKE, *&c.*
Suff. You've had, my lord, I fear,
An arduous task, which few could execute,
But Warwick; in the council and the field,
Alike distinguish'd, and alike successful.
King E. What says our cousin France?
Warw. By me, my liege,
He greets you well, and hopes in closer ties
United soon, to wear a dearer name.
At length, thank Heaven! the iron gates of war
Are clos'd, and peace displays her silken banners,
O'er the contending nations; ev'ry doubt
Is now remov'd, and confidence establish'd,
I hope, to last for ages.
King E. Peace, my lord,
Is ever welcome; 'tis the gift of Heaven,
The nurse of science, art's fair patroness,
And merit's best protector; but if France
Would chain us down to ignominious terms,
Cramp our free commerce, and infringe the rights
Of our liege subjects, England may repent,
Too late, her rash credulity; and peace,
With all her blessings, may be bought too dear.
Warw. The shame would then be his, who made the purchase.
If any doubt my faith, my honest zeal
For thee, and for my country, let him speak,
And I will answer; punish me, just Heaven,

If, in the task, I have consulted aught
But England's honour, and my sovereign's glory!

King E. Mistake me not, good Warwick, well I know
Thy spotless truth, thy honour, and thy love;
But glory has no farther charms for me:
Rais'd by thy pow'rful aid to England's throne,
I ask no more: already I am great,
As fame and fortune, with their smiles, can make me,
And all I wish for now, is to be happy.

Warw. That too, my liege, hath been thy Warwick's care;
Happy thou shalt be, if the fairest form
That ever caught a gazing lover's eye,
Join'd to the sweetest, most engaging virtues
Can make thee so. Bona accepts with joy,
Thy proffer'd hand: she is, indeed, a gem,
Fit to adorn the brightest crown: to see,
Is to admire her—trust me, England's self,
The seat of beauty, and the throne of love,
Boasts not a fairer.

King E. Beauty, good my lord,
Is all ideal; 'tis the wayward child
Of fancy, shifting with the changeful wind
Of fond opinion; what to you appears
The model of perfection, may disgust
My strange capricious taste.

Warw. Such charms would fix
Inconstancy itself: her winning virtues,
Ev'n if her beauty fail'd, would soon subdue
The rebel heart, and you would learn to love her.

King E. Is the passion to be learn'd then? wouldst thou make
A science of affection? guide the heart,
And teach it where to fix? Impossible!
'Tis strange philosophy! [*Rises and comes forward.*
My lord of Warwick,

Your zeal in England's, and in Edward's cause
Merits our thanks; but for the intended marriage
With France's daughter—it may never be.

Warw. Not be? it must! your sacred word is is pass'd,
And cannot be recall'd: but three days since
I sign'd the contract, and my honour's pledg'd
For the performance: Heavens! whilst fickle France
Is branded 'midst the nations of the earth,
For breach of public faith: shall we, my liege,
Practise ourselves, the vices we condemn?
Pass o'er a rival nation's ev'ry virtue,
And imitate their perfidy alone?

King E. You'll pardon me, my lord, I thought it part
Of a king's power, to have a will, to see
With his own eyes, and in life's little feast,
To cater for himself; but 'tis, it seems,
A privilege his subjects can refuse him.

Warw. And so they ought; the king who cannot conquer
His private int'rest, for the public welfare,
Knows not his duty.

King E. Kings, my lord, are born
With passions, feelings, hearts, like other men;
Nor see I yet, why Edward's happiness
Must fall a sacrifice to Warwick's honour.

Warw. My honour, sir, is yours—my cause, your own!
Who sent me, and whose image did I bear!
The image of a great, and glorious king,
Or, of a weak, and wav'ring boy?—henceforth,
Chuse from the herd of foaming sycophants,
Some needy slave for your mock embassy,
To do your work, and stain the name of England
With foul reproach:—Edward, I blush for thee,
And for my country; for, from this hour, expect

From injur'd France, contempt, with deep resentment
For broken faith, and enmity eternal.

King E. Eternal be it then; for, as I prize
My inward peace, beyond the pomp of state,
And all the tinsel glare of fond ambition,
I will not wed her.——Gracious Heaven! what am I?
The meanest peasant in my realm may chuse
His rustic bride, and share with her, the sweets
Of mutual friendship, and domestic bliss?
Why should my happier subjects then deny me,
The common rights, the privilege of nature,
And, in a land of freedom, thus conspire
To make their king the only slave among them?

Warw. The worst of slaves is he, whom passion rules,
Uncheck'd by reason, and the pow'rful voice
Of friendship, which, I fear, is heard no more
By thoughtless Edward. 'Tis the curse of kings
To be surrounded by a venal herd
Of flatt'rers, that sooth his darling vices,
And rob their master of his subjects' love.
Nay, frown not, sirs, supported as ye are,
I fear you not. Which of this noble train,
These well-beloved counsellors and friends,
Assembled here to witness my disgrace,
Have urg'd you to this base, unmanly falsehood?
Shame on you all! to stain the spotless mind
Of uncorrupted youth! undo the work
Of Warwick's friendly hand, and give him back
A sov'reign, so unlike the noble Edward.

Suf. My lord, we thank you for the kind suggestion,
Howe'er ill founded; and when next we meet,
To give our voice in aught that may concern
The public weal, no doubt shall ask your leave,
Ere we proceed.

Pemb. My lord of Suffolk, speak
But for yourself; Warwick has too much cause
To be offended: in my poor opinion,
Whate'er you courtiers think, the best support
Of England's throne, are equity and truth;
Nor will I hold that man my sov'reign's friend,
Who shall exhort him to forsake his word,
And play the hypocrite. What tie shall bind
The subject to obedience, when his king,
Bankrupt in honour, gives the royal sanction
To perfidy and falsehood?

Buck. It becomes
But ill the Earl of Pembroke——

King E. Good my lords,
Let us have no dissensions here; we met
For other purposes; some few days hence
We shall expect your counsel in affairs
Of moment; for the present, urge no further
This matter.—Fare ye well.

[*The Council breaks up, and disperses.*

King E. [*Coming up to* WARWICK.] Lord Warwick, keep
In narrower bounds, that proud impetuous temper;—
It may be fatal—there are private reasons;
When time befits, we shall impart them to you;
Meanwhile, if you have friendship, love, or duty,
No more of Bona—I'm determin'd. [*Exit.*

Warw. So—
'Tis well—'tis very well—I have deserv'd it;
I've borne this callow eagle on my wing,
And now he spurns me from him; 'tis a change
I little look'd for, and sits heavy on me.
Alas! how doubly painful is the wound,
When 'tis inflicted by the hand we love!
Cruel, ungrateful Edward!——
Ha! who's here?
The captive queen! if she has aught to ask

Of me, she comes in luckless hour, for I
Am pow'rless now.

Enter MARGARET OF ANJOU.

Warw. Will Margaret of Anjou,
Thus deign to visit her acknowledg'd foe?

Marg. Alas, my lord! inur'd to wretchedness
As I am, and familiar with misfortune,
I harbour no resentment; have long since
Forgot that Warwick ever was my foe,
And only wish to prove myself his friend.

Warw. Talk not of friendship, 'tis an empty name,
And lives but in idea; once, indeed,
I thought I had a friend.—

Marg. Whose name was—Edward;
Read I aright, my lord, and am I not
A shrewd diviner? Yes, that downcast eye
And gloomy aspect say I am: you look
As if the idol made by your own hands,
Had fall'n upon, and crush'd you—is't not so?
Come, come, I know it is.

Warw. Amazement! naught escapes thy piercing eye,
And penetrating judgment: 'tis too true;
I am a poor, disgrac'd, dishonour'd slave,
Not worth thy seeking; leave me; for the tide
Of court preferment flows another way.

Marg. The feast, perhaps, you have provided, suits not
With Edward's nicer palate; he disdains,
How sweet soe'er, to taste a foreign banquet,
And relishes no dainties but his own:—
Am I again mistaken?

Warw. Sure, thou deal'st
With some all-knowing spirit, who imparts
Each secret purpose to thee, else, how knew'st thou
That Edward had refus'd to wed the princess?

Marg. O, it requires no supernatural aid
To trace his actions, nor has Marg'ret trod
The paths of life with unobserving eye;
I could have told you this long since; for know,
The choice is made,
And, but for your return, as unexpected,
As undesir'd, had been, ere this, complete;
And, as in duty bound, you then had paid
Your due obedience to our—English queen.

Warw. Determin'd, say'st thou? Gracious Heaven! 'tis well
I am return'd.

Marg. Indeed, my lord, you came
A little out of season; 'twas unkind
To interrupt your master's happiness,
To blast so fair a passion in its bloom,
And check the rising harvest of his love.

Warw. Marg'ret, I thank thee—yes, it must be so;
His blushes, his confusion, all confirm it,
And yet I am amaz'd, astonished.

Marg. Wherefore?
Is it so strange, a mind, unfraught with wisdom,
And lifted high with proud prosperity,
Should follow pleasure, through the crooked paths
Of falsehood, should forsake a useless friend,
For the warm joys of animating beauty?

Warw. No; but was it like a friend—
Was it like Edward, to conceal his love?
Some base, insinuating, artful woman,
With borrow'd charms, perhaps——

Marg. Hold, hold, my lord,
Be not too rash; who fights in darkness, oft
May wound a bosom friend; perhaps, you wrong
The best, and most accomplish'd of her sex.

Warw. Know you the lady?

Marg. But as fame reports,
Of peerless beauty, and transcendent charms,
But, for her virtue—I must ask of—you.

Warw. Of me? What virtues? Whose?
Marg. Elizabeth's.
Warw. Amazement? no, it must not, cannot be!
Elizabeth! he could not, dare not do it!
Confusion! I shall soon discover all! [*Aside.*
But what have I to do with Edward's choice,
Whoe'er she be, if he refuses mine?
Marg. Dissimulation sits but ill, my lord,
On minds like yours. I am a poor weak woman,
And so, it seems, you think me; but suppose
That same all-knowing spirit which you rais'd,
Who condescends so kindly to instruct me,
Should whisper—Warwick knows the pow'r of love,
As well as Edward, that Elizabeth
Was his first wish, the idol of his soul;
What say you?—Might I venture to believe it?
Warw. Marg'ret, you might; for, 'tis in vain to hide
A thought from thee; it might have told you too,
If it be so, there is not such a wretch
On earth as Warwick: give me but the proof——
Marg. Lord Suffolk was last night despatch'd to Grafton,
To offer her a share in Edward's throne.
Warw. Which she refus'd, did she not, Marg'ret? say
She did.
Marg. I know not that, my lord, but crowns
Are dazzling meteors in a woman's eye:
Such strong temptations, few of us, I fear,
Have virtue to resist.
Warw. Elizabeth
Has ev'ry virtue. I'll not doubt her faith.
Marg. Edward is young, and handsome.
Warw. Curses on him!
Think'st thou, he knew my fond attachment there?
Marg. O, passing well, my lord; and when 'twas urg'd

How deeply 'twould affect you, swore by Heav'n,
Imperious Warwick ne'er should be the master
Of charms like hers! 'twas happiness, he said,
Beyond his subject's merit to deserve,
Beyond his hope to wish for, or aspire to.

Warw. But for that Warwick, Edward's self had been
A subject still—and may be so hereafter.—
Thou smil'st at my misfortunes.

Marg. I must smile
When I behold a subtle statesman thus
Duped and deluded by a shallow boy,
Sent on a fruitless errand to expose
His country and himself.—It was, indeed,
A master-stroke of policy, beyond,
One should have thought, the reach of years so green
As Edward's, to despatch the weeping lover,
And seize the glorious opportunity
Of tamp'ring with his mistress here at home.

Warw. Did Nevil, Rutland, Clifford, bleed for this?

Marg. For this doth Henry languish in a dungeon,
And wretched Marg'ret lead a life of woe:—
For this you gave the crown to pious Edward,—
And thus he thanks you for his kingdom.

Warw. Crowns
Are baubles, fit for children like himself,
To play with—I have scatter'd many of them:—
But thus to cross me in my dearest hope,
The sweet reward of all my toils, for him,
And for his country!—If I suffer it—
If I forgive him, may I live the scorn
Of men, a branded coward! and old age,
Without or love, or rev'rence, be my portion!
Henceforth, good Marg'ret, know me for thy friend—
We will have noble vengeance! are there not
Still left among the lazy sons of peace,

Some busy spirits, who wish well to thee,
And to thy cause?

Marg. There are—resentment sleeps,
But is not dead: Beneath the hollow cover
Of loyalty, the slumb'ring ashes lie
Unheeded; Warwick's animating breath
Will quickly light them into flames again.

Warw. Then, Edward, from this moment I abjure thee!
O, I will make thee ample recompense,
For all the wrongs that I have done the house
Of Lancaster!—go, summon all thy friends—
Be quick, good Margaret; haste, ere I repent,
And yield my soul to perjur'd York again.
The king, I think, gives you free liberty
To range abroad?

Marg. He does; and I will use it,
As I would ever use the gift of foes,—
To his destruction.

Warw. That arch pander, Suffolk,
That minister of vice—but time is precious—
To-morrow, Marg'ret, we will meet in private,
And have some further conference; meantime,
Devise, consult, use ev'ry means against
Our common foe: remember, from this hour,
Warwick's thy friend—be secret, and be happy.
[*Exit.*

Marg. What easy fools these cunning statesmen are,
With all their policy, when once they fall
Into a woman's power! This gallant leader,
This blust'ring Warwick—how the hero
Lessen'd to my sight!—Elizabeth,
I thank thee for thy wonder-working charms!
The time, perhaps, may come, when I shall stand
Indebted to them, for the throne of England.
Transporting thought!

The golden wreath once more shall bind my brow.
Proud York, beware! for Lancaster's great name
Shall rise superior in the lists of fame:
Fortune, that long hath frown'd, shall smile at last,
And make amends for all my sorrows past. [*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter MARGARET, LADY CLIFFORD, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Marg. Despatch these letters straight, to Scotland: this
To the French Envoy—these to the Earl of Pembroke. [*To a* GENTLEMAN.
Thus far, my friend, hath fortune favour'd us [*Turning to* LADY CLIFFORD.
Beyond our hopes: the soul of haughty Warwick
Is all on fire, and puling Edward loves
With most romantic ardour. O my Clifford,
You would have smil'd to see how artfully
I play'd upon him—flatter'd, sooth'd, provok'd,
And wrought him to my purpose.—We are link'd
In firmest bonds of amity and love.

Lady C. Hath Warwick, then, so soon forgot his Edward?

Think'st thou the frantic earl will e'er exert
His ill directed powers, to pull down
The royal structure which himself has rais'd?—
Never.

Marg. What is there disappointed love
And unrestrain'd ambition, will not do?
I tell thee, we are sworn and cordial friends.

Lady C. Thou know'st, he hates the house of Lancaster.

Marg. No matter; he has marvellous good skill
In making kings, and I have business for him.

Lady C. And canst thou, then, forget the cruel wrongs,
The deep felt injuries of oppressive Warwick,
To join the hand that forg'd thy husband's chains,
And robb'd thee of a crown?

Marg. But what, my Clifford,
If the same hand that ravish'd, should restore it!
'Tis a court friendship, and may last as long
As interest shall direct: I've not forgot,
No, nor forgiven; I hate, abhor, detest him—
He shall perish.
I keep him for the last, dear, precious morsel,
To crown the glorious banquet of revenge.

Lady C. 'Tis what he merits from us, yet th' attempt
Were dangerous, he is still the people's idol.

Marg. And so, perhaps, shall Marg'ret be;—applause
Waits on success. The fickle multitude,
Like the light straw that floats along the stream,
Glide with the current still, and follow fortune.

Lady C. What further succour have we to depend on,
Beside Earl Warwick's!

Marg. O, his name alone,
Will be an army to us.

Lady C. If we have it.
Resentment is a short-liv'd passion: what,
If Warwick should relent, and turn again
To Edward?

Marg. Then I have a bosom friend

That shall be ready to reward him for it—
But I have better hopes: Without his aid,
We are not friendless. Scotland's hardy sons,
Who smile at danger, and defy the storm,
Will leave the barren mountains to defend
That liberty they love; and to the aid
Of gallant Pembroke, and the powers which France
Will send to vindicate her injur'd honour:
Ere Edward can collect his force, and take
The field, we shall be thirty thousand strong.

Lady C. But what becomes of thy young prince?

Marg. Ay, there
I am indeed unhappy; O my child,
How shall I set him free? Hear, Nature! hear
A mother's prayer! O guide me with thy counsel,
And teach me how to save my darling boy!—
Ay, now I have it—monitress divine,
I thank thee!—yes, I wait but for the means
Of his escape, then fly this hated palace,
Nor will return till I can call it mine. [*Exeunt.*

Enter KING EDWARD *and* SUFFOLK.

King E. I fear we have gone too far: th' indignant Warwick
Ill brook'd our steady purpose—mark'd you, Suffolk,
With what an eye of scorn he turn'd him from us,
And lower'd defiance? that prophetic woman!
Half of her curse already is fulfill'd,
And I have lost my friend.

Suf. Some friends, perhaps,
Are better lost. You'll pardon me, my liege,
But, were it fitting, I could tell a tale
Would soon convince you, Warwick is as weak——

King E. As Edward, thou wouldst say.

Suf. But 'twill distress
Thy noble heart too much—I dare not, sir,
Yet one day you must know it.

King E. Then by thee

Let it be told me, Suffolk—thy kind hand
Will best administer the bitter draught:
Go on, my Suffolk, speak, I charge thee, speak.
Suf. That rival, whom you wish'd me to discover—
King E. Ay, what of him?—quick! tell me, hast thou found
The happy traitor? give me but to know,
That I may wreak my speedy vengeance on him.
Suf. Suppose that rival were the man, whom most
You lov'd—the man, perhaps, whom most you fear'd:
Suppose 'twere Warwick?
King E. Ha! it cannot be!
I would not think it for a thousand worlds—
Warwick in love with her!—Impossible!
Where didst thou learn this falsehood?
Suf. From the lips
Of truth—from one, whose honour, and whose word
You will not question—from Elizabeth.
King E. From her! nay, then, I fear, it must be so.
Suf. When last I saw her, (for again I went
By your command), though hopeless of success,
With all the little eloquence that I
Was master of, urg'd your ardent passion;—
Told her how much, how tenderly you lov'd her,
And press'd with eagerness to know the cause
Of her unkind refusal, till at length
Reluctantly, with blushes, she confess'd,
There was a cause: she thank'd you for your goodness,
'Twas more, she said, much more than she deserv'd,
She ever should revere her king, and if
She had a heart to give, it should be Edward's.
King E. So kind, and yet so cruel!—well, go on.
Suf. Then told me all the story of her love,
That Warwick long had woo'd her—that her hand
Was promis'd, soon as he return'd from France:
Though once her father cruelly oppos'd it,
They were, by his consent, to be united.

King E. O never, Suffolk, may I live to see
That dreadful hour! designing hypocrite!
Are these his arts? is this the friend I lov'd?
By Heaven, she shall be mine! I will shake off
This cumb'rous garb of majesty that clings
So close around me, meet him man to man,
And try who best deserves her!
Good Suffolk, for a while
I would be private—therefore, wait without;
Let me have no intruders; above all,
Keep Warwick from my sight.——

Enter WARWICK.

Warw. Behold him here;
No welcome guest, it seems, unless I ask
My Lord of Suffolk's leave—there was a time
When Warwick wanted not his aid to gain
Admission here.

King E. There was a time, perhaps,
When Warwick more desir'd, and more—deserv'd it.

Warw. Never; I've been a foolish faithful slave;
All my best years, the morning of my life,
Hath been devoted to your service: what
Are now the fruits? disgrace and infamy.
My spotless name, which never yet the breath
Of calumny had tainted, made the mock
For foreign fools to carp at: but 'tis fit
Who trust in princes, should be thus rewarded.

King E. I thought, my lord, I had full well re-
pay'd
Your services, with honours, wealth, and power
Unlimited: thy all directing hand
Guided in secret ev'ry latent wheel
Of government, and mov'd the whole machine;
Warwick was all in all, and pow'rless Edward
Stood like a cypher in a great account.

Warw. Who gave that cypher worth, and seated
thee

On England's throne? Thy undistinguish'd name
Had moulder'd in oblivion, had not Warwick
Dug from its sordid mine the useless ore,
And stamp'd it with a diadem. Thou know'st
This wretched country, doom'd, perhaps, like Rome,
To fall by its own self-destroying hand—
Tost for so many years in the rough sea
Of civil discord, but for me had perish'd.
In that distressful hour I seiz'd the helm,
Bade the rough waves subside in peace, and steer'd
Your shatter'd vessel safe into the harbour.
You may despise, perhaps, that useless aid
Which you no longer want; but know, proud youth,
He who forgets a friend, deserves a foe.

King E. Know, too, reproach, for benefits receiv'd
Pays every debt, and cancels obligation.

Warw. Why, that, indeed, is frugal honesty,
A thrifty, saving knowledge; when the debt
Grows burdensome, and cannot be discharg'd,
A spunge will wipe out all, and cost you nothing.

King E. When you have counted o'er the num'rous train
Of mighty gifts your bounty lavish'd on me,
You may remember next the inj'ries
Which I have done you: let me know them all,
And I will make you ample satisfaction.

Warw. Thou canst not; thou hast robb'd me of a jewel
It is not in thy power to restore:
I was the first, shall future annals say,
That broke the sacred bond of public trust
And mutual confidence; ambassadors,
In after times, mere instruments, perhaps,
Of venal statesmen, shall recal my name
To witness, that they want not an example,
And plead my guilt, to sanctify their own.
Amidst the herd of mercenary slaves

That haunt your court, could none be found but Warwick,
To be the shameless herald of a lie?

King E. And wouldst thou turn the vile reproach on me?
If I have broke my faith, and stain'd the name
Of England, thank thy own pernicious counsels
That urg'd me to it, and extorted from me
A cold consent to what my heart abhorr'd.

Warw. I've been abus'd, insulted, and betray'd;
My injur'd honour cries aloud for vengeance;
Her wounds will never close!

King E. Oh, fear it not!
If I have been right
Inform'd, my lord, besides these dang'rous scars
Of bleeding honour, you have other wounds
As deep, though not so fatal: such, perhaps,
As none but fair Elizabeth can cure.

Warw. Elizabeth!

King E. Nay, start not! I have cause
To wonder most: I little thought, indeed,
When Warwick told me, I might learn to love,
He was, himself, so able to instruct me;
But I've discover'd all.——

Warw. And so have I;
Too well I know thy breach of friendship there,
Thy fruitless, base endeavours to supplant me.

King E. I scorn it, sir.—Elizabeth hath charms,
And I have equal right with you t'admire them:
Nor see I aught so godlike in the form,
So all-commanding in the name of Warwick,
That he alone should revel in the charms
Of beauty, and monopolize perfection.
I knew not of your love.

Warw. By Heav'n, 'tis false!
You knew it all, and meanly took occasion,
Whilst I was busy'd in the noble office,
Your grace thought fit to honour me withal,

To tamper with a weak, unguarded woman,
To bribe her passion high, and basely steal
A treasure, which your kingdom could not purchase.

King E. How know you that? but be it as it may,
I had a right, nor will I tamely yield
My claim to happiness, the privilege
To chuse the partner of my throne and bed:
It is a branch of my prerogative.

Warw. Prerogative!—what's that? the boast of tyrants:
A borrow'd jewel, glitt'ring in the crown
With specious lustre, lent but to betray:
You had it, sir, and hold it, from the people.

King E. And therefore do I prize it; I would guard
Their liberties, and they shall strengthen mine:
But when proud faction, and her rebel crew,
Insult their sov'reign, trample on his laws,
And bid defiance to his power—the people,
In justice to themselves, will then defend
His cause, and vindicate the rights they gave.

Warw. Go to your darling people, then; for soon,
If I mistake not, 'twill be needful; try
Their boasted zeal, and see if one of them
Will dare to lift his arm up in your cause,
If I forbid them.

King E. Is it so, my lord!
Then mark my words: I've been your slave too long,
And you have rul'd me with a rod of iron;
But henceforth know, proud peer, I am thy master,
And will be so: the king who delegates
His power to others' hands, but ill deserves
The crown he wears.

Warw. Look well, then, to your own;
It sits but loosely on your head, for know,
The man who injur'd Warwick never pass'd
Unpunish'd yet.

King E. Nor he who threaten'd Edward—

You may repent it, sir.—My guards, there!—seize
This traitor, and convey him to the Tower;
There let him learn obedience.

Enter GUARDS, *who seize* WARWICK, *and endeavour to disarm him.*

Warw. Slaves, stand off!
If I must yield my sword, I'll give it him,
Whom it so long has serv'd; there's not a part
In this old faithful steel, that is not stain'd
With English blood in grateful Edward's cause.
Give me my chains! they are the bands of friendship,
Of a king's friendship; for his sake, a while
I'll wear them.

King E. Hence! away with him!——

Warw. 'Tis well:
Exert your power, it may not last you long;
For know, though Edward may forget his friend,
That England will not.—Now, sir, I attend you.
[*Exit.*

Pemb. Presumptuous rebel!—ah! who's here?

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My liege,
Queen Marg'ret, with the prince, her son, are fled;
In a few hours she hopes, for so we learn
From those who have pursu'd her, to be join'd
By th' Earl of Warwick; in his name, it seems,
She has already rais'd three thousand men.

King E. Warwick in league with her! O, Heav'n! 'tis well
We've crush'd the serpent, ere his poison spread
Throughout our kingdom—guard the palace gates,
Keep double watch; summon my troops together—
Where is my brother Clarence, Buckingham,
And Pembroke? we must check this foul rebellion.
[*Exit* MESSENGER.

Enter the EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Suf. My liege, the Duke of Clarence——
King E. What of him?
Suf. Hath left the court; this moment I beheld him
In conf'rence deep with Pembroke, who, it seems,
Is Marg'ret's firmest friend; 'tis whisper'd, both
Will join the queen.
King E. Well! 'tis no matter: I
Have deeper cause for grief; he cannot feel
A brother's falsehood, who has lost a friend,
A friend like Warwick.—Suffolk, thou behold'st me
Betray'd, deserted by the man I lov'd;
Treated with indifference by her,
Whom I ador'd, forsaken by my brother,
And threaten'd by the subjects I protect;
Oppress'd on every side; but, thou shalt see,
I have a soul superior to misfortunes.
Though rebel Clarence wrings my tortur'd heart,
And faithless Warwick braves me, we will yet
Maintain our right——Come on, my friend, thou know'st,
Without his boasted aid, I could have gain'd
The crown—without him now I will preserve it.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Tower.

Enter the EARL OF WARWICK.

Warw. Mistaken mortals plan delusive schemes
Of bliss, and call futurity their own,
Yet are not masters of a moment—This
Was the appointed time, the very day
Which should have join'd me to Elizabeth
In nuptial bonds:—O, cruel memory,
Do not torment me—if there be a crime
Of deeper dye than all the guilty train
Of human vices, 'tis—ingratitude.
O, for that stoic apathy, which lulls
The drowsy soul to sweet forgetfulness!
But 'twill not be:—Elizabeth, where art thou?
Perhaps with Edward—O, that thought distracts me!
It is, I fear, as Marg'ret said; she's false.
But when I look around me, can I hope
To find one virtue left in human kind?
My Pembroke, too! am I so soon forgotten?
O no; he comes——

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. My friend!
Warw. My Pembroke, welcome!
Thee I have found most just and kind;

But, in the darkness of adversity,
The jewel friendship shines with double lustre.

Pemb. I am not of the insect train, that bask
In fortune's sunshine, and, when ev'ning damps
Arise, are seen no more: no, Warwick, what
I speak, I mean: you have been hardly treated.

Warw. O, Pembroke! didst thou know but half the wrongs
That I have suffer'd, thou wouldst pity me.

Pemb. I would do more, much more, my Warwick: he,
Who only pities, but insults the wretched:
I come with nobler views; I come to tell thee,
That I have felt thy inj'ries as my own,
And will revenge them too.

Warw. How kind thou art,
To feel for Warwick!

Pemb. Ev'ry honest breast
Must feel the inj'ries that a good man suffers:
Thine is the common cause of all: adieu
To English freedom, when our liberty
Shall be dependent on a sov'reign's nod,
When years of honest service shall be paid
With infamy and chains!

Warw. I've not deserv'd them.

Pemb. Nor shalt thou wear them long; for thou hast great
And powerful friends—the noble Duke of Clarence—

Warw. Ha!
Then I am not forsaken: Clarence!—

Pemb. Yes:
The gallant youth, with honest zeal, declar'd
He lov'd his brother much, but justice more.

Warw. Then, Edward, I defy thee! gen'rous Clarence!
Thou know'st, the man who thus could treat a friend
Would soon forget a brother—but say, Pembroke,
How stands the Duke of Buckingham?

Pemb. Fast bound
To Edward; he, and that smooth courtier, Suffolk,
Are the two rotten pillars that support
His tott'ring throne: but Marg'ret——

Warw. Ay; how fares
My new ally? has she escap'd the tyrant?

Pemb. She has: and, by some wondrous means, contriv'd
To free her captive son.

Warw. Though I abhor,
I must admire that enterprising woman:
Her active mind is ever on the wing,
In search of fresh expedients, to recover
The crown she lost.

Pemb. Already she has rais'd
A pow'rful army; all the secret foes
Of York's ambitious line rush forth in crowds,
And join her standard; ere to-morrow's sun
Shall dawn upon us, she will set thee free.

Warw. O, Pembroke! nothing wounds the gen'rous mind
So deep as obligations to a foe.
Is there no way to liberty, my friend,
But through the bloody paths of civil war?

Pemb. I fear there is not.

Warw. Then it must be so:
I could have wish'd—but freedom and revenge
On any other terms are welcome.

Pemb. Here then join we
Our hands——

Warw. Our hearts.

Pemb. Now, Warwick, be thou firm
In thy resolves; let no unmanly fears
No foolish fond remembrance of past friendship,
Unnerve thy arm, or shake thy steady purpose.

Warw. No, by my wrongs, it shall not: once, thou know'st,
I lov'd him but too well, and this vile prison

Is my reward.—O, give me but the use
Of this once powerful arm, and thou shalt see
How it shall punish falsehood.—Are thy forces
Prepar'd?

Pemb. They are, and wait but for my orders:
Clarence will join us soon; our first great end
Is to secure thy liberty; that done,
We haste to seize the palace, and redeem
The fair Elizabeth.

Warw. Redeem her! ha!
Is she a captive too?

Pemb. A willing slave;
A gay state prisoner, left to roam at large
O'er the young monarch's palace.

Warw. Ay, my Pembroke!
That's more inviting than a prison. O,
She's false, she's false!——Who sent her there?

Pemb. She came,
It seems, to thank him for his royal bounties
To her good father, the new Earl of Rivers,
Who will, no doubt, persuade her to accept——

Warw. Of Edward's hand--Distraction! fly, my friend,
Haste thee to Marg'ret; tell her, if she hopes
For Warwick's aid, she must release him now,
Ere Edward's ill-tim'd mercy shall prevent her.

Pemb. I go, my friend; adieu! when next we meet,
I hope to bring thee liberty. [*Exit.*

Warw. Farewell!
She's lost! she's gone! that base seducer, Edward,
Hath wrought on her weak mind; it must be so.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord,
The Lady Elizabeth.

Warw. Amazement! sure
It cannot be! admit her, sir. Why, what
[*Exit* MESSENGER.

Could bring her here? Edward has sent her hither,
To see if I will crouch to him for pardon.
Be still, my jealous heart——

Enter LADY ELIZABETH GREY.

Lady E. G. My Warwick!

Warw. 'Tis a grace I look'd not for,
That a fair fav'rite, who so late had tasted
The pleasures of a court, should condescend
To visit thus a poor abandon'd captive.

Lady E. G. I come to take my portion of misfortune,
To pour the balm of comfort in, and heal,
If possible, the wounds which I had made.
Too well I know I was the fatal cause
Of all thy sorrows—but the noble Edward,
For so, indeed, he is——

Warw. And art thou come,
To plead the cause of him who sent me hither?

Lady E. G. I come to be the messenger of peace,
To calm thy troubled soul, and give thee rest;
To teach my Warwick to forget his wrongs.

Warw. Forget my wrongs! was that thy errand here,
To teach me low submission to a tyrant;
To ask forgiveness, kneel, and deprecate
The wrath of blust'ring Edward? If thou com'st
On terms like these to bring me freedom, know
It will not be accepted: now I see
Through all your arts; by Heav'n, I'd rather lose
A thousand lives, than owe one to his bounty.

Lady E. G. Either my Warwick is much chang'd, and so
I fear he is, or he would never talk
Thus coldly to me, never would despise
A life so precious, if he knew how much
Elizabeth had suffer'd to preserve it.
The gallant Edward, won by my entreaties——

Warw. Entreaties! didst thou then descend so low,
As to entreat him for me?
Lady E. G. Hadst thou seen,
When I implor'd him to forgive my Warwick,
How kind he look'd, how his repenting heart
Heav'd with the pangs of agonizing friendship,
Thou wouldst have pity'd him.
Warw. Deceitful woman!
I see thy falsehood now; I am betray'd,
And thou art leagu'd with Edward to destroy me.
Go to your royal lover, and unite
Those only fit companions for each other,
A broken friendship, and a perjur'd love.
Lady E. G. Unkind suggestions! how have I deserv'd it?
Have I for this refus'd a youthful monarch,
And spurn'd his offer'd sceptre at my feet?
But since I am suspected, witness Heav'n,
And witness, Warwick, to my vows! henceforth,
Dear as thou art, I cast thee from my love;
Elizabeth will never wed—a traitor!
Warw. Am I awake, and did Elizabeth
Say she would never wed her faithful Warwick?
I wish'd for freedom, but to purchase thine:
For life, but to enjoy it with my love,
And she disclaims me.
Lady E. G. Heav'n forbid! O, Warwick,
Let not the tide of passion thus o'erwhelm
Thy reason.
Warw. Canst thou pardon me? thou know'st
Th' unguarded warmth, the weakness of my nature.
I would not wrong thee, but I've been so oft,
So cruelly deceiv'd.
Lady E. G. I know thou hast;
But never by Elizabeth.
Warw. O, no!
It is impossible that perfidy
Should wear a form like thine. [*Looking at her.*

I wonder not
That Edward lov'd: no, when I look on thee,
All beauteous, all enchanting as thou art,
By Heav'n! I think I could almost forgive him.

Lady E. G. Then wherefore not be reconcil'd?

Warw. To whom?
The author of my wrongs? It cannot be:
Know, I have promis'd Marg'ret to destroy him.

Lady E. G. Destroy thy friend! ungen'rous, cruel Warwick!
Is't not enough that thou hast triumph'd here?
Already we have pierc'd his noble heart
With the keen pangs of disappointed love:
And wouldst thou wound his breast with added sorrows?
Wouldst thou involve a nation in his ruin?

Warw. Elizabeth, no more: alas! too well
Thou know'st, there is a pow'rful advocate
In Warwick's breast, that pleads for perjur'd Edward.

Lady E. G. Cherish the soft emotion: O, my Warwick!

Warw. That angel form can never plead in vain:
But then, my friends—where is my solemn vow
To Marg'ret, and to Pembroke? There's the tie.

Lady E. G. Thy league with Marg'ret must be fatal: grant
We should succeed, and Lancaster once more
Assume the throne; how dear the victory,
That's purchas'd with our fellow subjects' blood!
But if we fall——

Warw. Impossible!

Lady E. G. Oh, think
Betimes, what dreadful punishments await
The vanquish'd rebel! thou, perhaps, my love,
Shalt then be doom'd to th' ignominious block,
To fall inglorious; and, when thou art gone,
Who shall defend thy poor Elizabeth?

Warw. Alarming thought! It staggers my firm purpose,
And makes me half a villain.

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. Madam, the king demands your presence; I
Have orders to convey you to the palace.

Warw. And wilt thou leave me?

Lady E. G. This, my Warwick, this
Is the decisive moment; now determine,
Accept of mercy, ere it be too late;
Ere hasty Edward——Shall I say thou wilt
Return to thy obedience, and receive
Thy pardon? Shall I? Speak, my love.

Warw. Perhaps
I may accept it, if 'tis brought by thee.

Lady E. G. Then we shall meet in happiness——

Warw. Farewell! [*Exit* LADY ELIZABETH.
Now to those worst companions in affliction,
My own sad thoughts, again; they're gloomy all,
And, like my habitation, full of horror.
I like not Edward's message; if he hears
My league with Marg'ret, he still has pow'r
To make me feel his rage: I have deserv'd it——
[*A Trampling heard without.*
Methought I heard a noise—this way they come.
Perhaps it is the messenger of death——

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. The messenger of vengeance—see her sword;
Accept it, and be free. [*Offers the Sword.*

Warw. First let me know
To whom I am indebted for't.

Pemb. To me.
Soon as the rumour of thy foul disgrace
Had reach'd the public ear, th' impatient people,
Uncertain of thy fate, tumultuous throng'd
Around the palace, and demanded thee:

Give us our Warwick, give us back, they cry'd,
Our hero, our deliv'rer!—I stepp'd forth,
And bade them, instant, if they wish'd to save
The best of men from infamy and death,
To follow me: transported, they obey'd:
I led them hither; forc'd the prison gates,
And brought thee this—direct it as thou wilt.
[*Gives the Sword.*

Warw. Welcome, once more, thou dearest gift of Heav'n!
Immortal liberty! my friend, I thank thee.
O, Pembroke! 'would thou hadst been here! my love,
My dear Elizabeth, is true.

Pemb. You think so.

Warw. She has told me such sweet truths;
Edward repents him sorely; he is griev'd
At his ingratitude.

Pemb. And well he may;
I fear thou art betray'd: alas, my Warwick!
Thy open, gen'rous, unsuspecting virtue,
Thinks ev'ry heart as honest as thy own.
Thou know'st not Edward—nor Elizabeth.
The kingdom is in arms, and ev'ry hour
It is expected France will join the queen;
England will want her great protector's aid;
Edward and Rivers have conspir'd to cheat
Thy credulous ear; and who so fit to spread
The flimsy web as thy Elizabeth,
Their fair ambassadress? I see thou'rt caught.

Warw. By Heav'n, it may be so! I am the sport
Of fortune and of fraud.

Pemb. Away, my friend;
It is not now a time to think of her:
Marg'ret, supported by thy pow'rful name,
And join'd by Clarence, waits us at the head
Of fifteen thousand men, who, eager all
To crush a tyrant, and pull down oppression,
Attend thy wish'd for presence; not a soldier

Will act or move till Warwick shall direct them.
Edward and England's fate depend on thee.

Warw. Away, my friend; I'll follow thee.

[*Exit* PEMBROKE.

Yet stop
A moment—let not passion hurry me
To base dishonour—If my country calls
For Warwick's aid, shall I not hear her voice,
And save her? Pembroke may have private views,
And subtle Marg'ret too—Elizabeth!
I must not lose thee—Oh! direct me, Heav'n! [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter LADY ELIZABETH GREY.

Lady E. G. The royal pardon came too late, and Pembroke
Already has releas'd him; he is gone——
Elizabeth may never see him more.
A thousand terrors haunt me; a fond father,
A guiltless sov'reign, a distracted lover,
Fame, fortune, friends, and country, all depend
On one eventful moment—Hark! the sound

Of distant groans; perhaps the king—perhaps
My Warwick bleeds. O! agonizing thought!
Great God of armies, whose all-guiding hand
Directs the fate of nations, Oh! look down
On thy own image, let not cruel discord
Divide their kindred souls! In pity hear,
Pour thy benignant spirit o'er their hearts,
And once more knit them in the bonds of peace!

Enter SUFFOLK.

Suf. The pray'r of innocence is always heard.
Lady E. G. Ha! Suffolk! whither hastes thou? art thou come——
Suf. I come to heal thy sorrows, lovely fair one;
To tell thee, Edward, and thy much lov'd Warwick,
Once more are friends.
Lady E. G. Indeed! O, welcome news!
My joy's too great for utt'rance: tell me, Suffolk,
How was it? speak, is Warwick safe? O, Heav'n!
Suf. A moment's patience, and I'll tell thee all.
Marg'ret, thou know'st, had rais'd a pow'rful force,
That doubled Edward's troops; elate with pride,
And almost sure of victory, she urg'd
The tardy spearmen; on they rush'd, as if
Secure of conquest: the unhappy king
Stood nobly firm, and seem'd to brave his fate;
When Warwick, like a guardian god, appear'd:
His noble mien, and all commanding look,
Struck deep attention; every eye was bent
Upon him, and an awful silence reign'd
O'er either host: he rais'd his voice on high,
And, Stop, he cry'd, your sacrilegious hands,
Nor touch my friend: who pierces Edward's breast,
Must pass through mine; I rais'd him to the throne,
And will support him there; to you I gave,
From you, my fellow soldiers, I expect him:
Howe'er the cruel wrongs have wounded me,

He never injur'd you, and I—forgive him.
He spake, and instant through the gazing crowd
A murmur ran; down dropp'd their nerveless arms,
As if enchanted by some magic power,
And, with one voice, they cry'd, Long live King Edward!

Lady E. G. How pow'rful is the tongue of eloquence,
When in the cause of virtue!—Well, what follow'd?

Suf. Encourag'd by the shouting soldiers, Edward
On like a modest virgin wishing came,
Yet fearful. Warwick, with a bridegroom's speed,
To meet him flew; into each other's arms
They ran with speechless joy: the tender scene
Affected ev'ry heart, and the rough soldier,
Unus'd to melting sympathy, forgot
His ruthless nature, and dissolv'd in tears.

Lady E. G. Sweet reconcilement! then, Elizabeth,
Thou didst not plead in vain. But, say, how brook'd
The haughty queen this unexpected change?

Suf. Abash'd, confounded, for a while she strove
To stem the torrent, but in vain; then fled
Precipitate.

Lady E. G. But where, Oh, where's my Warwick?

Suf. With a few chosen squadrons he pursues
The disappointed Marg'ret.

Lady E. G. Oh, my fears!
I know not why, but at that hateful name
I tremble ever, my foreboding heart
Presages something dreadful.

Suf. Do not vex
Thy tender mind with visionary dangers.

Lady E. G. Oh! would to Heaven that he were shelter'd here,
And safe within these arms!

Suf. Be not alarm'd;
He is the care of Heaven; all good men love,
All bad ones fear him.

Lady E. G. Such superior merit
Must have a thousand foes, the constant mark
Of envy's poison'd darts.
Suf. There Suffolk feels
The keen reproach; with blushes I confess
There was a time, when, urg'd by fond ambition,
I look'd on Warwick with a jealous eye:
But this last noble deed hath won my heart,
And I am now a convert to his virtues;
But see, the king approaches. [*Exit* SUFFOLK.

Enter KING EDWARD.

King E. Health, and peace,
And happiness, to fair Elizabeth!
Thou art no stranger to the joyful news;
The lustre of those speaking eyes declares it.
Lady E. G. Suffolk, e'en now, hath bless'd me with the tidings.
King E. O! 'tis amazement all: Elizabeth,
When last we met, thou wert the suppliant; now,
'Tis I must ask forgiveness—I, who injur'd
The dearest, best of men; O! thou hast sav'd
Edward from shame, and England from destruction.
Lady E. G. Did I not say, my Warwick would be just?
King E. Thou didst; and on those beauteous lips, fair truth,
And soft persuasion dwell: long time he stood
Inflexible, and, deaf to friendship's voice,
Listen'd to naught but all-subduing love.
In after times, thy name shall be enroll'd
Amongst the great deliv'rers of their country.
Lady E. G. I have no title to the lavish praise
Thy gen'rous heart bestows; I only said
What duty prompted, and what love inspir'd;
Indulgent Heav'n has crown'd it with success.
King E. Thou hast done all: I am indebted to thee

For more, much more, than I can e'er repay.
Long time, with shame I own, hath Warwick soar'd
Above me; but I will not be outdone
For ever by this proud aspiring rival:
Poor as I am, there yet is one way left
To pay the debt of gratitude I owe him;
One great reward for such exalted virtues—
Thyself, Elizabeth.

Lady E. G. What means my lord,
My royal master?

King E. Yes; when next we meet
I will bestow it on him, will resign
All my fond claim to happiness and thee:
Though thy dear image ne'er can be effac'd
From Edward's breast; though still I dote upon thee;
Though I could hang for ever on thy beauties;
Yet will I yield them to their rightful lord;
Warwick has earn'd, Warwick alone deserves them.

Lady E. G. 'Would he were here, to thank thee for thy goodness!
Know, gen'rous prince, Elizabeth has long
Admir'd thy virtues, and could love admit
Of a divided heart, the noble Edward
Would share it with his friend.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My royal liege,
The rebels are dispers'd; queen Margaret's son
Was slain in the pursuit—and she——

King E. I hope
Secur'd——

Mess. Is taken prisoner, and will soon
Be here.

King E. But where's Lord Warwick?

Mess. Behold, the queen approaches.

Enter MARGARET, *Prisoner.*

Marg. Once more I am your prisoner.

King E. 'Twill be prudent
Henceforth to keep you so.
Marg. You dare not!
Thou think'st, perhaps, that I shall sue to thee
For mercy: no; in Margaret of Anjou,
Thou seest the wife, and daughter of a king.
A spirit not to be subdu'd; though fall'n,
Triumphant still; and, though a pris'ner, free.
For know, I bear a mind above the reach
Of fortune, or of Edward. I have lost
All I could wish to live for, in my child;
And gain'd, what I most wish'd to gain—revenge!
Or life or death are now indiff'rent to me.
King E. For thy unbounded goodness, Power supreme,
Accept our praise!
Marg. Insulting piety! the common trick
Of hypocrites and slaves! when ye shall know
What Marg'ret knows, ye may not be so thankful.
Methinks, 'tis pity Warwick is not here,
To join in your devotion.
Lady E. G. Would to Heav'n
He were!
Marg. That monster, that perfidious slave,
Who broke his faith to Margaret, and to thee;
Thy coward soul, unable to defend
The treasure thou hadst stolen, could meanly stoop
To court the traitor, whom thou dar'st not punish.
Not so the injur'd Marg'ret—she repell'd
The wrongs she felt, and the deceiver met
The fate he merited.
King E. What fate?—E'en now,
Crown'd with immortal wreaths, the hero comes
To bless his friends, and punish guilt like thine.
Marg. Proud and deluded wretches! I look down
With pity on you: captive as I am,
'Tis mine to judge and punish; be it yours

To hear and tremble.

King E. Ha!

Lady E. G. What can this mean?

Marg. If I mistake not, Warwick is your friend;
Your lover too, I think.

Lady E. G. My lord! my husband!

Marg. Know then, that friend, that lover, perjur'd Warwick,
Hath not an hour to live.

King E. What murd'rous hand——

Marg. Mine, tyrant, mine: think not I mean to hide
The noble deed; it is my happiness,
It is my glory: thou wilt call me base,
Blood-thirsty, cruel, savage, and revengeful.
But here I stand acquitted to myself,
And every feeling heart that knows my wrongs.
To late posterity, dethroned queens,
And weeping mothers, shall applaud my justice.

King E. Justice, on whom?

Marg. Can Edward ask me? Who
Imprison'd Henry—robb'd me of a crown,
And plac'd it on a proud usurper's head?
Who gave his sacred promise to a queen,
And broke it? who, for which indignant Heav'n
Chastis'd him, basely murder'd my sweet boy?
Bereft of honour, fortune, husband, child—
Depriv'd of ev'ry comfort, what remain'd
For me but vengeance—what for him, but death?

King E. What hast thou done! When? Where? Speak, murd'ress—speak!

Marg. Press'd by surrounding multitudes, and made
A slave, they dragg'd me to the conqu'ror's tent:—
There, the first horrid object I beheld,
Was the pale corse of my poor bleeding child:
There—as th' insulting Warwick stood, and seem'd

To triumph o'er him—from my breast I drew
A poniard forth, and plung'd it in his heart.
[LADY E G. *faints.*

King E. She faints, good Suffolk!—help, there!—help!—support,
[*Exeunt* LADY E. G. *and* SUFFOLK.
Assist her.—Lead her in.
If it be true, as much I fear it is, a thousand deaths
Were punishment too little for thy guilt:
Thou shalt be tortur'd.

Marg. Tyrant, I defy thee;
Thy threats appal not me: prepare thy tortures;
Let them be sharp and cruel as thyself—
All that ingenious malice can suggest,
Or power inflict—'twill be my comfort still,
They cannot be so great as those you feel.

King E. Guards, take the monster hence! let her be chain'd
In some deep dungeon;
There let her perish—hence, away with her.

Marg. Despair and horror visit thee—farewell—
He comes, my triumph is complete—Look there!
[*Exit.*

Enter WARWICK, *leaning on* TWO ATTENDANTS.

Warw. Where is he? Lead me, lead me to my king.

King E. My Warwick! my preserver!—she shall bleed
For this, in ev'ry vein.

Warw. Think not of her;
She has no power to hurt thee! and with guilt
Like her's, 'tis punishment enough to live;
This is no time for vengeance; death comes on
With hasty strides; 'tis but a little while,
A few short moments, and we part for ever.
My friend——

King E. I am not worthy of the name,

For I disgrac'd, dishonour'd, murder'd thee:
Edward's unkindness was the cause of all——
Canst thou forgive me?
Warw. O! may Warwick's crimes
Ne'er meet forgiveness from offended Heav'n,
If, from my soul, I do not pardon, love,
And honour thee!
My sweet Elizabeth,
Where is she? Edward, do not keep her from me—
We are no rivals now.
King E. Shock'd at the news
Of thy untimely fate, she sunk beneath it,
And fainted in these arms: I seiz'd th' occasion,
And bade her weeping maidens bear her hence:
This would have been a dreadful sight indeed.
Lady E. G. [*Without.*] I can, I will support it.
Warw. Ha! that voice——
Sure, 'tis Elizabeth's!

Enter LADY ELIZABETH GREY.

Lady E. G. O! give me way,
For I must see him—O! my Warwick?
Warw. O!
This is too much—the bitterness of death
Is to be sever'd thus from those we love.
Elizabeth, be comforted!
Lady E. G. O, no, it is my doom
Never to taste of joy or comfort more;
No; from this hateful world will I retire,
And mourn my Warwick's fate, imploring Heaven
That I may soon wear out my little store
Of hopeless days, and join thee in the tomb.
Warw. That must not be; I've done my friend a wrong,
And only thou canst make atonement for it.
Elizabeth, if e'er thou lov'dst,
Observe me now.—Edward, for my sake

Cherish this beauteous mourner, take her from me,
As the last present of a dying friend.

King E. If aught could make the precious gift more dear,
It would be, Warwick, that it came from thee.
O! I will guard her with a parent's care
From ev'ry ill, watch over and protect her;
And when the memory of thee shall awake,
As oft it will, her poignant griefs, repel
The rising sigh, wipe off the flowing tear,
And strive to charm her to forgetfulness.

Warw. Then I shall die in peace.

Lady E. G. Yet thou may'st live.

Warw. Impossible: I feel
The hand of death press cold upon my heart,
And all will soon be o'er.

King E. Alas, my friend, the memory of thee
Will poison every bliss.

Warw. All-healing time,
That closes every wound, shall pour its balm
O'er thine.—Meanwhile, remember Warwick's fate.
I gave my word to Margaret, and broke it;
Heav'n is not to be mock'd, it soon o'ertakes us,
And in our crime we meet our punishment.
O, Edward, if thou hop'st that length of days,
And fair prosperity, shall crown thy wishes,
Beware of passion and resentment—make
Thy people's good and happiness thy own,
Discourage faction, banish flatterers,
Keep thy faith inviolate, and reign in peace.
I can no more—My love!—Have mercy, Heaven!
[*Dies.*

King E. Let ev'ry honour, to a soldier due,
Attend the hero to his tomb—meanwhile,
Deep in the living tablet of my heart,
Will I engrave thy words—illustrious shade!
Living, thou wert my counsellor and friend—
And dead, I will remember and obey thee.

Lady E. G. Warwick, farewell! I shall not long survive thee.

King E. I hope thou wilt—Elizabeth, remember
His dying charge, think on thy promise giv'n.
Thou shalt remain with me, with me lament
Our common benefactor; we will sit
And talk together of my Warwick's virtues,
For I will try to emulate them all,
And learn, by copying him, to merit thee.
His great example shall inspire my breast
With patriot zeal—shall teach me to subdue
The pow'r of faction, vanquish party rage,
And make me, what alone I wish to be,
The happy king of an united people.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.